

Finding Aid of the Idol and Welch Family Papers, 1823-1978 PC.1967

Finding aid prepared by Fran Tracy-Walls

This finding aid was produced using the Archivists' Toolkit

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State Archives of North Carolina
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Summary Information

Repository	State Archives of North Carolina
Creator	Idol Family.
Creator	Welch Family.
Title	Idol and Welch Family Papers,
Date [inclusive]	1823-1981
Extent	2.0 boxes 2/3 cubic feet
Location	For current information on the location of these materials, please consult the Public Services Branch, North Carolina State Archives.
Language	English
Abstract	<p>The Welch and the Idol families had established roots in Davidson County in the early 19th century or before, but the branches represented in these papers moved to Guilford County prior to the Civil War. There various members settled in or near High Point, a township laid out in 1853. The men were primarily farmers and carpenters, and several saw service in the war.</p>
Abstract	<p>First as a young woman and later as a wife and mother, Julia Welch received the majority of the letters represented in the collection, about twenty of thirty-eight. The papers are organized chronologically into the following series: Indentures, 1823-1879; Civil War Era Correspondence, 1861-1865; Post Civil War Era, Correspondence, 1866-1902; Idol and Welch Family History and Genealogical Materials, 1943-1978; and Reminiscences of Verta Idol Coe. The indentures and almost all of the letters are original; the series of family history and genealogical materials</p>

are photocopies; the last series is an audio recording (CD) converted from a cassette recording, 1981, and including recollections of Mrs. Coe (1891-1982), High Point area.

Preferred Citation

[Identification of item], PC.1967, Finding Aid of the Idol and Welch Family Papers, State Archives of North Carolina, Raleigh, NC, USA.

Biographical/Historical note

Welch Family:

Originally from Davidson County, William Welch (circa 1796-1879) and Elizabeth Raper (circa 1802-1877) were wed in 1820 in Guilford County. A farmer, Welch owned land near the settlement that by the 1850s was known as High Point. One of the town's founders, he also maintained a store on one of High Point's original lots. In 1855 the first postmaster at High Point was the Welch's son, Austin Henry (circa 1833-1898). In addition to Austin, at least ten other children were born to this union, including the following youngest children, whose correspondence is included, or who are mentioned in these papers: William Pleasant (1837-1924); Alfred A. (1835-1 January 1862); Jasper J. (1840-1914); Henry N. (1840-1864); Julia Vitturia (1848-1904).

At the beginning of the Civil War, two of the Welch sons, enlisted as follows in Forsyth County, Co. E, 21st Regiment N.C. Troops (11th Regiment, N.C. Volunteers): Jasper J. (Sergeant) on May 24, 1861; and Henry N. (Private) on June 1, 1861. On 26 April 1862 they both were transferred to Company B, 1st Battalion N.C. Sharpshooters. Jacob J. was promoted to 1st Sergeant 1 Feb. 1863. Henry N. was appointed corporal on 31 August 1863 and later killed in action at Bachelor Creek, N.C., 1 February 1864. Jacob J. was paroled at Appomattox Court House, Va., 9 April 1865.

Idol Family:

Hannah Nicholson (1811-1877), Stokes County native, and Jehu Idol (circa 1805-1885), of Davidson, then Guilford Counties, were parents of at least four children including John N. Idol (circa 1838-1891), and Anderson Mathias (1847-1923).

During the Civil War two Idol sons enlisted as follows: John Idol on May 24, 1861 Forsyth County, Co. E, 21st Regiment N.C. Troops (11th Regiment, N.C. Volunteers) and transferred to Company B, 1st Battalion N.C. Sharpshooters. A.M. [Anderson M.] Idol on 1 August 1864 in Lenoir County, and served with Company B, 1st Battalion N.C. Sharpshooters. Both men were accounted for until paroled at Appomattox Court House, Va., 9 April 1865.

Welch and Idol Family.

Julia Vitturia Welch and Anderson Mathias Idol married in 1871, and settled in High Point, N.C. There they raised a family, including the following five children (see letter of 3 Jan. 1897): Virgil (1880-1961); Vernon (circa 1885-1958); Elizabeth Vera (1886-1977); Verta Louise (Coe) (1891-1982); and Victor (1894-1973). By profession Anderson Idol was a carpenter who specialized in finishing work. Vera was recognized in 1960, upon retirement from High Point College (now University) as head of the English Department. Verta Louise's remembrances, 1895-1944 (photocopied) of her childhood, her work, and family life and written in February, 1978 are included in these papers.

Albert A. Gordon (1839-1925):

See biographical information in Series Description: Civil War Era Correspondence, 1861-1865.

Sources consulted in addition to the contents of the collection: Louis H. Manarin and Weymouth T. Jordan Jr., comps., *North Carolina Troops, 1861-1865: A Roster*, 13 vols. (Raleigh: Division of Archives and History, Dept. of Cultural Resources, 1966-), 3: 80, 83; 6:576, 578; 7: 39; North Carolina Death Certificates, 1909-1975; North Carolina Marriage Bonds, 1741-1868. United States Census: 1850, 1860, 1870, 1880, 1900. Additionally, High Point Chamber of Commerce, comps., *The Building and the Builders of a City: High Point, North Carolina* (High Point: Hall Printing, 1947), 48.

Collection Overview

The earliest records in the papers are some indentures or agreements, 1823-1879, regarding property located in Davidson, Forsyth, and Guilford counties, including one dated November 28, 1853 involving land that predated High Point's charter of 1859, and reportedly was parceled out to become part of the city's downtown. There are seven indentures in total. The collection includes 13 originals of Civil War letters of soldiers, including two members of the Welch family, who served in the company known as the "Forsyth Grays" of the 21st North Carolina until it was transferred to the 1st Battalion N.C. Sharpshooters (and designated Company B of that battalion). Of note is a group of four letters written to Julia Welch from A. [Alfred] A. Gordon, dated from 11 September 1864 to 28 December 1864. He was by then a sergeant in Co. E, 22nd Regiment N.C. Troops (Scales Brigade), having enlisted in Guilford County early in the war. There is one letter dated July 26, 1867 from an unidentified soldier wounded, imprisoned, escaped to England, and returned. In the period following the Civil War, there seventeen letters from or to members of the Welch and Idol families, written primarily between 1867 and 1902. There is a series of Idol and Welch family history and genealogical materials. This consists of miscellaneous items such as news clippings; various photocopied items and recollections concerning the Welch and Idol families, including a roster of 1st NC Battalion, Co. B, made at Petersburg, Va.

Series include Indentures, 1823-1879; Correspondence: Civil War Era, 1861-1865; Correspondence: 1866-1902; Idol and Welch Family History and Genealogical Materials: 1943-1978; Audio recording (CD) converted from a cassette recording, 1981, and including recollections of Mrs. Coe (1891-1982), High Point area.

Collection Arrangement

Arranged by type of material or topic and arranged chronologically thereunder.

Administrative Information

Publication Information

State Archives of North Carolina 2011

Revision Description

Item added and additional description, July 2012

Access Restrictions

Available for research.

Copyright Notice

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Acquisitions Information

Received as a gift April 2008 from Lee Sherrill, Oxford, N.C.; John Sherrill, Atlanta, Ga.; Ellen Gibbs, Winston-Salem, N.C.; Judy Denby, Greensboro, N.C.; Kay Kelly, High Point, N.C.; and Ann Koontz, Calabash, N.C. The addition of an audio recording (CD) of reminiscences of Verta Idol Coe, 1981, was received as a gift April 2012, from her grandson, Lee Sherrill, Oxford, N.C.

Processing Information

Processed by Fran Tracy-Walls, 2010; 2012.

Encoded by Fran Tracy-Walls, 2011; 2012.

Related Materials

Related Collections

Additional information on topics found in this collection may be found in the Manuscript and Archives Reference System (MARS) <http://mars.archives.ncdcr.gov/BasicSearch.aspx>.

Controlled Access Headings

Corporate Name(s)

- Confederate States of America. Army. North Carolina Battalion, 1st. Sharpshooters.
- Confederate States of America. Army. North Carolina Infantry Regiment, 21st. Company E.
- Confederate States of America. Army. North Carolina Infantry Regiment, 21st. Forsyth Grays.
- Confederate States of America. Army. North Carolina Infantry Regiment, 22st. Company E.

Family Name(s)

- Idol family.
- Welch family.

Genre(s)

- Indentures

Geographic Name(s)

- Davidson County (N.C.)
- Guilford County (N.C.)
- High Point (N.C.)
- United States--History--Civil War, 1861-1865.
- Watauga County (N.C.)

Personal Name(s)

- Coe, Verta Louise Idol
- Gordon, Alfred A.
- Idol, Anderson Mathias.
- Idol, Elizabeth Vera.
- Idol, John N.
- Idol, Julia Welch.
- Welch, Henry N.
- Welch, Jasper J.

Subject(s)

- High Point (N.C.)--History.
- High Point (N.C.)--Social life and customs.
- Women in war.
- Women--19th century.
- Women--20th century.

Indentures

Collection Inventory

Indentures 1823-1879

Scope and Contents note

Consists of seven indentures, 1823 to 1879, and encompassing Davidson and Guilford Counties. The indenture dated 28 November 1854, from Solomon Kendall to William Welch involves land located in the area of downtown High Point, a town laid out in 1853 and incorporated in 1859.

Box

Davidson Co., Jan. 13, 1823

PC.1967.1

To: Samuel Welborn and Isaac Odell, et al.

Davidson Co., Oct. 12, 1827

PC.1967.1

To: Isaac Odell, et al to Ashley Swaim.

Guilford Co., Nov. 28, 1853

PC.1967.1

From: Solomon Kendall to William Welch. This was an indenture for the purchase of land along the Plank Road and located north of the North Carolina Railroad--much of which was sold (in auction) to create a village at the depot, known as High Point (1853).

Davidson Co., Nov. 10, 1855

PC.1967.1

Correspondence: Civil War Era

Between Jehu Idol et al (2nd and 3rd parties).

Davidson Co., Oct. 12, 1827

PC.1967.1

To: Isaac Odell, et al to Ashley Swaim

Davidson Co., July 1, 1875

PC.1967.1

From: Jehu Idol to A.M. Idol.

Rental Agreement: No County Listed, Nov. 6, 1879

PC.1967.1

Between: A.M. Idol and W.B. Stack.

Correspondence: Civil War Era 1861-1865**Scope and Contents note**

Of the nineteen letters in the series, dated from 14 April 1861 to 25 February 1865, thirteen are written by six different Confederate soldiers related by kinship or friendship to the Welch family. The series concerns to a lesser extent the Idol family. In addition to references to military campaigns, troop movements, battles and skirmishes, these letters contain comments about daily life in military camps; health; family members in service and other soldiers known to the family; appreciation of kindnesses of women in war time; the soldier's sentiments for home and family; hopes for peace, and more. The correspondents who saw military service were J. J. Welch (see Biographical Note above); H.N. Welch (see Biographical Note above); Cpl. S.A. Raper (evidently a cousin of the Welch family, through the paternal family line of their mother, Elizabeth Raper Welch); John N. Idol (a brother of the future husband of Julia, Anderson M. Idol and possibly a cousin); and A.A. [Alfred A.] Gordon, apparently a friend from Guilford County. Nine of these were addressed to Julia V. Welch. The troops

Correspondence: Civil War Era

represented include the 21st N.C., which was transferred and included thereafter, Co. B, 1st Battalion N.C. Sharpshooters; and Co. E, 22nd Regiment N.C. Troops, Scales Brigade.

On the subject of one soldier's purpose and motivation behind military service for the Confederacy, of particular note is a letter from J.J. Welch to A.A. Welch, 18 August 1861, in which he displayed intense loyalty and personal thoughts and feelings about his and his comrades roles in the war. This is best expressed in the following sentence: "We stand ready anxiously waiting the time when we may be of service to our country by driving back the miserable abolitionist hordes from our soil, and if we should be so unfortunate as to fall we fall in a glorious cause in a cause that I had rather die than to stay back and act the coward like some are doing in our section, who I might name but will not."

The letters during the Civil War era also include four written to Julia by her brother W.P.(William Pleasant) Welch. His letters suggest a physical limitation or other hardship that made him fear the "gard" [Home Guard?], and therein refer to his various efforts to obtain a substitute, a discharge, and to appear before the "Enrolling Office and Examine Board" probably in Watauga County or Wilkes or another nearby county.

These nineteen letters do not include any references to the deaths of H.N.(Henry) Welch or A.A. Welch. However, the letters do suggest some of the hardships and stresses endured by the family and portray an image of a tight-knit family circle that surely was shaken by these tragedies.

The most descriptive of the letters were the five addressed to Julia from A. [Alfred] A. Gordon from 11 September 1864 to 28 December 1864. He was by then a sergeant in Co. E, 22nd Regiment N.C. Troops (Scales Brigade), having enlisted in Guilford County at the age of 22, in June 1861. Mustered in as a private, he was later wounded at the second battle of Manassas, Va. and eventually promoted to sergeant. Gordon served as provost guard at Gordonsville, Va. from about late January, 1864 through August of that year; and apparently rejoined Company E in during September or October, 1864.

The Gordon letters contain a variety of references including those to military officers and leaders; politics and politics; religion with mention of church attendance and baptisms in a nearby river; troop movements; military campaigns, skirmishes, battles, including the Fall of Atlanta (surrender on 2 September 1864); military supplies and rations; hopes for peace, conditions of and brief descriptions of military encampments; anecdotes; furloughs; desertions, gratitude for food items received from home including Julia's pound cake; comparison between Christmas at home and in the camp; and his efforts to acquire rings for Julia. Sergeant Gordon's high esteem of Julia was evident and the letters hint of a romantic interest; but the absence in this collection of her letters leaves one to guess about the level of

Correspondence: Civil War Era

her interest in Gordon beyond a genuine concern with his welfare and morale, typical of so many women in war time. Historic records show that Gordon (1839-1925) was married in 1866 in Guilford County to Elvinia Swaim (1840-1921), a young woman probably related to the Welch Family; and the couple reared a family in the High Point township, where they lived until their deaths in the 1920s.

Note: Most letters have transcriptions and photocopies provided by donors.

Box

From Rebecca P. Cruner[?] to Cousin H.N. Welch, ca. 14 April 1861

PC.1967.2

Content of the letter is not related to Civil War. Note that date appears to be 1801, but internal evidence suggests the year 1861.

From J. J. Welch, Danville, 27 June 1861

PC.1967.2

Letter c/o Capt. Wharton, Forsyth Grays. Reference to Henry being well.

From J. J. Welch to A.A. Welch, August 18, 1861

PC.1967.2

Location: Camp Rhett near Mannassas, Va. Reference to Henry being well.

From H.N. [Henry] Welch to Mr. Pitts, Dec. 26, 1861

PC.1967.2

Location: Danville, Va.

From A. H. Welch [brother] to J. [Julia], July 21, 1862

PC.1967.2

Correspondence: Civil War Era

Location: Charlotte. Not Civil War related.

From brother, William Pleasant Welch to Julia, May 4, 1863

PC.1967.2

Location: Stony Fork (Watauga County), N.C. Not Civil War related.

From brother, William Pleasant Welch to Julia, May 5, 1863

PC.1967.2

Location: Stony Fork (Watauga County), N.C. Not Civil War related.

From brother, J. J. Welch to Julia, February 21, 1864

PC.1967.2

Location: Kinston, NC

John N. Idol to his mother and father, April 25, 1864

PC.1967.2

Location: Kinston, NC

From J. J. Welch to Sister, Julia, June 8, 186[4]

PC.1967.2

Location: Kinston, NC

From brother, William Pleasant Welch to Julia, ca. June 23 1864

PC.1967.2

Location: Stony Fork (Watauga County), N.C. Not Civil War related.

Correspondence: Civil War Era

From Cpl. S.A. Raper to Cousin, Julia, ca. Aug. 24, 1864

PC.1967.2

Location: Albemarle County, Va.

From brother, William Pleasant Welch to Julia, September 3, 1864

PC.1967.2

Location: Stony Fork (Watauga County), N.C. Not Civil War related.

From A.A. Gordon to Miss J. V. [Julia], Sept. 11, 1864

PC.1967.2

Location: Gordonsville, Va. Re: Fall of Atlanta; Chicago convention.

From A.A. Gordon to Miss J. V. [Julia], Oct. 30, 1864

PC.1967.2

Scope and Contents note

Location: near Petersburg, Va. Re: Co. E 22nd NC Regt., Scales Brigade.

From A.A. Gordon to Miss J. V. [Julia], Nov. 21, 1864

PC.1967.2

Location: Petersburg, Va. Re: Co. E 22nd NC Regt., Scales Brigade.

From: J.J. Welch to Sister [Julia], [?] Dec. 20, 1864

PC.1967.2

Location: Petersburg, Va. Re: Camp 1st N.C. Batt. 7.

Correspondence: Post Civil War Era

From A.A. Gordon to Julia, Dec. 28, 1864

PC.1967.2

Location: Petersburg, Va. Re: Co. E 22nd NC Regt., Scales Brigade.

From S.F. Shields to Julia, Feb. 25, 1865

PC.1967.2

Location: Camp near Stoney Creek, Va.

Correspondence: Post Civil War Era 1866-1902

Scope and Contents note

The Post Civil War Correspondence consists primarily of family letters exchanged from 1866 to 1902. The first from an unidentified man, DPS, apparently was wounded during the war, escaped to England and returned. While some letters were posted from Illinois, Missouri, and New Jersey, most were sent from North Carolina. Some of the letters exchanged between Julia Welch and Anderson M. Idol predate their marriage in the 1870s. The letters represented in this collection cease about a two years before her death circa 1904.

Box

From DPS to Dear Uncle (please direct to John W. Smith), July 26, 1867

PC.1967.2

Location: Mattan, Ill.(Mattoon?) Note: Apparently DPS was wounded during the war, escaped to England and returned.

From : C. J. Wattkins (?) to Julia, Dec. 8, 1867

PC.1967.2

Correspondence: Post Civil War Era

Location: Gloucester City, N.J.

From A. H. Welch to W. Welch, Jan. 29, 1868

PC.1967.2

Location: Charlotte, N.C.

From John M. Reece to Julia (Cousin), Oct. 17, 1869

PC.1967.2

Location: Rowletta, Mo.

From W. Shields to Julia, Nov. 28th, 1869

PC.1967.2

Location: Nazareth Hall, Northampton, Pa. Appears to be a courtship letter.

From John M. Reece to Julia (Cousin), ca. April 5, 1870

PC.1967.2

Location: [? Rowletta, Mo.]

From Ance [A.M. Idol] to Julia, ca. Oct. 15, 1872

PC.1967.2

Location: Wood Lawn, Gaston County.

From Ance [A.M. Idol] to Julia, ca. Nov. 21, 1872

PC.1967.2

Location: Mountain Island, Gaston County

Correspondence: Post Civil War Era

From F.L Oakley to A.M. Idol, High Point, Feb. 16, 1875

PC.1967.2

Location: Anderson's Store, Caswell County. Envelope included.

From A. H. Welch to A.M. Idol, High Point, ca. Nov. 11, 1875

PC.1967.2

Location: Charlotte, N.C.

From A. M. Idol to Father and Mother, March 15, 1876

PC.1967.2

Location: Bennettsville, S.C.

From Julia to Ance [A.M. Idol], July 17, 1889

PC.1967.2

Location: High Point, N.C.

From Julia to Ance [A.M. Idol], July 19, 1889

PC.1967.2

Location: High Point, N.C.

From Ance [A.M. Idol] to [Julia] Wife and Babie, July 21, 1889

PC.1967.2

Location: Louisburg, N.C.

From Ance [A.M. Idol] to Julia, July 28, 1889

PC.1967.2

Idol and Welch Family History and Genealogical Materials

Location: Louisburg, N.C.

From Julia to Ance [A.M. Idol], April 2, 1891

PC.1967.2

Location: High Point, N.C.

From Julia to Ance [A.M. Idol], April 10, 1891

PC.1967.2

Location: High Point, N.C.

From Anderson M. Idol to JN [John Nicholson Idol], Jan. 3, 1897

PC.1967.2

Location: High Point, N.C.

From C.F. Swain to Dear Cousin, Dec. 4, 1902

PC.1967.2

Location: Mound City, MO. References General Gordon and General Lee.

3 Letters typed from originals and photocopied from Idol Family Members and C.F. Swaim to John Nicholson Idol, 1876 and 1894

PC.1967.2

Location: Watauga County, N.C. and Mound City, Missouri.

Idol and Welch Family History and Genealogical Materials 1943-1978

Scope and Contents note

Reminiscences of Verta Idol Coe, at the age of 90

The bulk of this series consists of photocopied materials relating to the Welch and Idol families, including genealogical research, letters regarding genealogy, marriage bonds, Bible records; copies of material donated by the Idol Family to the High Point Museum, etc. Clippings from newspapers include articles concerning the Idol Family gift to the Baptist Orphanage, circa 1943-1949; and clippings regarding the retirement of long-time teacher, Vera Idol, former head of the English Department at High Point College. Vera and her sister Verta Louise were daughters of Julia Welch and Anderson M. Idol.

Box

Copies of Genealogical Research, Letters, Marriage Bonds, Bible Records

PC.1967.2

Photocopied typescript of compiled genealogy, "Descendants of John Nicholson and Thursa Green Idol," 1978

PC.1967.2

Photocopied handwritten memories of [Verta] Louise Idol Coe, ca. 1978

PC.1967.2

Clippings of Idol Family gift to the Baptist Orphanage, Thomasville, ca. 1943-1949

PC.1967.2

Clippings regarding retirement of Vera Idol, Teacher and Former Head of the English Department at High Point College, 1960

PC.1967.2

Photocopied Materials Relating to the Idol Family Held by the High Point Museum, originals circa 1865; 1919.

PC.1967.2

Reminiscences of Verta Idol Coe, at the age of 90 January 1981 1.0 folders

Box

PC.1967.2

Scope and Contents note.

This is an audio recording that features Mrs. Coe's recollections of everything she could remember from the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries of life in High Point and environs. She touched on schools, churches, families, even telling about the night that electric lights were turned on in High Point. The following is a listing indicating her

Reminiscences of Verta Idol Coe, at the age of 90

relationship to the family: Name: Verta Louise Idol Coe was a daughter of Julia Welch and Anderson M. Idol; Birth: 27 SEP 1891 in N.C.; Death: 12 APR 1982 in High Point, Guilford County, N.C.; Burial: Oakwood Cemetery, High Point, N.C.; Father: Anderson Matthias Idol; Mother: Julia Veturia Welch Idol; Marriage to: Samuel Staley Coe b: 1881 in Guilford County, N.C.; Married: 28 September 1916 in Guilford County, N.C. Note: The CD recording was made from a audio cassette tape and was a gift by her grandson, Lee W. Sherrill, Jr., Oxford. A CD audio recording was also donated to the High Point Museum. A cassette tape was previously in that museum.